

Abington Public Library Annual Report - 2009

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Abington:

As the economic downturn deepened, 2009 became a year of serious challenges for the Town and the Abington Public Library. In accordance with its mission, the Abington Public Library provided information services for the residents of Abington. 116,676 items – books, audiobooks, dvds, videos, music cds, magazines and museum passes were borrowed by 74,083 library users. The monetary value of these items equals \$1,923,490.00 (source: Massachusetts Library Association Value of Library Service Calculator at www.masslib.org).

2009 circulation of library materials was up 5% over 2008 figures. 2009 again saw a dramatic increase in demand for the Library's Internet computers and in wireless Internet use. Job seekers flocked to the Library, seeking Internet access, resume and career information. The Library's Internet computers logged 5,616 user sessions during the year, an increase of 17.3% from 2008. Residents' demand for access to technology and assistance in locating materials in print and on-line increased steadily throughout the year.

As user demands increased, library resources decreased. The Library budget was reduced from \$436,478 to \$393,021 at the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1. A budget shortfall resulted in another decrease in October, further reducing the budget to \$371,955, a 14.8 % decrease from the previous fiscal year. Library hours were reduced by 10% in October; this cut resulted in the elimination of more than 500 hours of staff time for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. In order to avoid further reducing library hours, the Board of Library Trustees decided to use State Aid funds to pay for staffing. State Aid funds are usually used to enhance and expand library services but the Board believed that maintaining minimal staffing levels was a priority given the economy. More than 800 hours are expected to be funded by State Aid from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. The library staff took 251.5 hours of unpaid furlough from March to June to offset the town budget shortfall for fiscal 2009. It is anticipated that the library staff will take just over 500 hours of unpaid furlough time in fiscal 2010. The Trustees thanked the members of the library staff for volunteering to take additional furlough hours in October which helped prevent layoffs and a further reduction in library hours.

Due to the budget reduction, the Library failed to meet minimum funding requirements for State Aid Certification from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. A waiver application was filed in October, and at the end of the year, the Board of Library Trustees was hopeful that the waiver would be granted in February 2010. Certification is necessary for residents to receive reciprocal borrowing privileges from other libraries, and for the Library to receive State Aid funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Friends of the Library conducted fund raising activities including the annual magazine subscription drive and the spring book sale. The Friends provided Museum passes and funding for children's programs. In 2009 the Friends made an unprecedented donation of funds to purchase library materials, supplementing the drastically reduced municipal budget. The Friends also provided support and assistance for adult programming, and continue to conduct a very successful book discussion group.

The community was again generous to the Library. Gifts were received from the Abington Lions Club, The Anderson Foundation, a bequest in memory of Joyce Lee Bumpus, and a donation from the proceeds of Jack Bailey's daylily sale to support Sheila's Garden. The Abington Bank continued to

fund bookmarks. Many individual residents made donations for library materials, in response to the budget crisis.

In 2009 the Library hosted a series of children's cultural programs funded by the Anderson Foundation. The Hampstead Stage Company's presentation of *Prince Caspian* was a highlight of this series. A presentation by *Barn Babies*, in which baby animals visited the library, was enjoyed by a large crowd and funded by the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Library also generously funded preschool and toddler story times, afterschool story-craft programs, the popular book discussion clubs for children and teens, and the summer reading program. "Starship Adventure" the 2009 summer reading program, was enjoyed by 170 children and teens who read a total of 1,723 hours. In both the spring and fall, the Kathy Greenwood Fund sponsored a Spanish Story Hour series for preschoolers. Total attendance at children's and teen programs for 2009 was 2,523.

The Board of Library Trustees saw changes in 2009 as Trustees Janet O'Connor and Cynthia Whiting retired. The Board thanks both outgoing members for many years of dedication and service to the library users of Abington. Gail Bergin and Kathleen Jones were elected in April and welcomed as the newest Board members. In September the Board approved a new Strategic Plan which will inform decision making for the next five years. The Board is grateful to the members of the community committee who gave their time to assist in the planning process: Amanda Adamczyk, Sandy Bumpus, Mary Cordeiro, Christopher Jones, Kathy Jones, Lou Paragona, Emily Miranda, Erin O'Neill, Lorraine O'Neill, Nancy Reid, and Betty Slinger. Trustees Will Adamczyk, Henry DiCarlo and Jake O'Neill participated in the planning process as Board representatives.

The Library Trustees wish to thank the many volunteers, both young people and adults who donated their time to provide better library service for the community. The Trustees and Acting Director also recognize the dedication and professionalism of the Library Staff: Sandy Bumpus, Judith Condon, Michelle Cooke, Susan Durand, Jodie Hurst, Barbara Libby, Emily Miranda, Isa Murray and Linda Sampson.

Selected 2009 Library Statistics

Circulation: 116,676

Total Collection: 68,579

Registered Borrowers: 6,987

Hits on the Library website: 1,410,490

Reference questions: 7.072 (average of 136 per week)

Abington Public School Class Visits: 30

Respectfully submitted,
Henry DiCarlo, Chairman
Betty Henderson, Vice Chairman
John O'Neill, Secretary
William Adamczyk
Gail Bergin (term began April 2009)
James Doucette

Jonathan Harris
Kathleen Jones (term began April 2009)
Christina McMahon
Janet O'Connor (term ended April 2009)
Cynthia Whiting (term ended April 2009)
Deborah Grimmett, Acting Library Director